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Kyle Haderlie
Utah State University

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The Impact of Parents' Past Experiences on Parenting Styles and Practices in Organized Youth Sport



Kyle Haderlie

**Utah Conference on
Undergraduate Research**

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Introduction



Approximately 35
million children in
the United States
participate in
Organized Youth
Sport each year
(Weiss & Hayashi, 1996)

One of the primary reasons children become involved in organized youth sport is because their **parents** introduce them and facilitate their involvement in sport-related activities (Wuerth, Lee, & Alfermann, 2004)

Introduction (cont.)

Many parents sacrifice and invest a significant amount of money, time, and emotional energy in supporting their children's sport-related activities (Green & Chalip, 1997).



Introduction (cont.)

Parents' past experiences seem to have an impact on parent involvement in organized youth sport
(Snyder & Purdy, 1982)



Participants

A subset of **46 U.S. parents** (17 fathers, 29 mothers) were recruited from a large-scale study being conducted in Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US.

Parents ranged in age from 33 to 53 years ($M = 43.96$, $SD = 4.84$).

83% as White or Caucasian, 11% Black or African American, 6% multi-racial or “other”.

Parents reported a range of experience in sport, ranging from 2 to 20 years ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 1.22$):

- 91% participated in **youth** sport
- 70% participated in **secondary school** sport
- 26% participated in **club, travel, or elite** sport
- 35% participated in **college or university** sport
- 4% participated in **Olympic or international** sport
- 4% participated in **professional** sport

Method

Procedure:

Participants were recruited through league directors in non-school based youth sport programs. Data were collected through the open-ended surveys via online interface at the convenience of the participant.

Data Analysis:

OPEN CODING - The process of identifying themes in the data
300 + themes were found

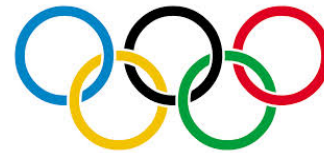
AXIAL CODING - The process of identifying categories and subcategories of the themes identified in open coding
13 Categories
18 Sub-Categories

Results

Parent's goals for their OWN youth sport participation:

Non-Competitive to more competitive

- “[To] have something to do”
- “[I wanted to] win championships, play at the college level, and play recreationally for life.”
- “I wanted to go to the Olympics”.



Perceived benefits of OWN sport participation:

Immediate

- “I gained a sense of belonging”

Long-Term

- “I loved being an athlete as a young girl and gained confidence...and have carried that confidence into being an adult.”



Results (cont.)

Parent's goals for their CHILDREN'S participation in organized youth sport:

Social

- “[I want them to] experience joys of being part of a team”

Emotional

- “I want my daughter to feel strong and confident in her body and proud of her athletic abilities.”

Behavioral

- “[I want my children] to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat.”

Cognitive

- “I would like them to gain the critical skill of setting smart goals and taking daily steps that help them reach those goals.”

Outcome

- “I would like to see my children participate in high school athletics and possibly at the college level.”

Results (cont.)

Parent's current roles in child's participation:

Volunteer

- “Our goal is to keep kids involved and develop their skills”

Fiduciary

- [I provide] financial support [and] transportation, [am a] cheerleader, [I] decorate buses for trips, monitor grades for eligibility, and communicate with coaches.”

Parenting Styles:

- “Demanding, but fair.”



Parenting Practices:

- “[I] Never miss a game, [I] step in and coach where needed, [and I] mentor the other children.”

Discussion

Contributions

- Insight into parenting styles and practices in organized youth sport

Findings

- Parenting styles are adjusted according to other parenting styles

Parents with limited/no past experience

- The goals of the four participants who did not participate in organized youth sport aligned largely with the goals of the other 42 participants who did.

Limitations

- Situated in a single social context (i.e., organized youth sport)

Future Research

- Aimed at understanding parenting styles in more diverse populations with parents from a range of ethnic, SES, and geo-political backgrounds.

Thank You!

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Kyle Haderlie

kyle.handerlie@aggiemail.usu.edu